TOWARD A BEHAVIORAL MODEL OF MANAGEMENT UNDER COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

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Abstract

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The elements of a behavioral model of management in a collective bargaining relationship are presented in this paper. The model is cast within the pluralist normative assumptions that underlie the study and practice of industrial relations and collective bargaining in the United States. The model integrates propositions from the organizational behavior, collective bargaining, and personnel and human resource management literatures to explain variations in the policies, structures, and goals of employers. Variations in these employer characteristics are then related to the traditional dependent variables studied within collective bargaining: (1) the process of negotiations, (2) the outcomes of bargaining, (3) the administration of the bargaining agreements, and (4) the process of change within a collective bargaining relationship. It is argued that the ultimate objective of the model should be to explain the effects of management policies and behavior on the goals and interests of the employer, the employees, the union, and the public.

The study of management under collective bargaining has been neglected by North American scholars in recent years. This paper hopes to stimulate renewed interest in this area. Data from a study of American managers are used to provide an empirical basis for building the model.

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Considerable progress was made in the last decade in integrating the behavioral sciences into the study of various industrial relations topics. Papers presented at this conference demonstrate that perhaps the most progress was made in developing behavioral models of the negotiations process, strikes and impasses and the various procedures for conflict resolution. Behavioral models of the organizational characteristics of trade unions, particularly their structure, internal democracy, membership participation, and overall effectiveness have also been developed (Child, Loveridge, and Warner, 1973; Anderson, 1977). Models of organizational change under collective bargaining have been proposed (Kochan and Dyer, 1976) and the process of changing the work environment in unionized organizations has been studied empirically (Goodman, 1979).

One of the areas of industrial relations that has not yet been systematically addressed by behavioral researchers is the study of management under collective bargaining. In fact, the study of management under collective bargaining has generally been neglected by North American scholars since the classic study by Slichter, Healy, and Livernash (1960).

The purpose of this paper is to take a first step toward a model of the role of behavior of management under collective bargaining. The paper will apply some of the principles outlined in an earlier review paper, (Kochan, 1980a) for moving toward a stronger integration of behavioral science theories, concepts, and techniques into the study and practice of collective bargaining and industrial relations. Some descriptive data collected in a survey of over 600 private sector

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firms by the U.S. Conference Board (Freedman, 1979) will be used to illustrate the need and the potential for the kind of theory and research advocated here.

Type of Model Needed

In an earlier paper (Kochan, 1980a) I argued that the behavioral sciences have a potentially important role to play in improving our understanding and in influencing the practices of industrial relations at the micro (organizational) level. To realize this potential, models or theories of the middle range are needed that (1) are sensitive to the normative premises underlying the study and practice of industrial relations and (2) focus on the key outcomes of interest to industrial relations scholars and practitioners. Too often, behavioral scientists have been insensitive to the diversity of interests represented at the workplace and have failed to adequately understand the nature of labor-management relations and collective bargaining. Consequently, the models that have been developed within mainstream organizational behavior have often been too abstract or general, or have failed to understand the issues of central concern in industrial relations, thereby limiting their utility for industrial relations researchers, policymakers, or practitioners. Consequently, this paper will start by first laying out some of the normative considerations that are relevant to the study of management under collective bargaining, then present a general model that helps identify where management characteristics and practices fit into a collective bargaining system, and finally suggest some of the key questions that a theory of management under collective bargaining should address. It is hoped that this effort will provide a framework for guiding empirical research on these issues and will help to stimulate renewed interest in this area.

Normative Perspectives

The material in this paper is oriented towards the American Collective bargaining system. Thus, before beginning we should have an explicit statement of what the normative premises are that guide research and public policy in this area.

The normative premises underlying the U.S. system of collective bargaining are derived from a pluralistic view of industrial relations (Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison, and Myers, 1960); Barbash, 1964; Fox, 1971; Flanders, 1970). A partial conflict of interest is assumed to exist between workers and their employers. This conflict is derived from workers' drive for economic security, independence, and control over workplace decisions and employer concerns for economic efficiency and discretion and control over decision making. The conflict of interests is viewed as inherent, permanent, and legitimate, yet both parties share a common interdependence that requires periodic accomodation of their interests. Therefore, there is an assumption that industrial relations decisions can best be arrived at through negotiations, compromise and accomodation. Collective bargaining is one means of structuring and regulating this decision making process.

For this process to work, both labor and management must accept the legitimacy of the other party to the process, and indeed must be committed to making the process work. The role of power is central to this pluralistic model. Indeed, it will be argued here that the pluralistic model requires a minimum balance of power between labor and management for the negotiations and accomodation process to work effectively. Unless each party has sufficient power to require the other to respond to its interests, the negotiations process will not be initiated or sustained through time and the system will turn to one of unilateral determination or paternalism.

Management's role under collective bargaining, therefore, is to not only protect the efficiency and other managerial interests of the firm, but to also contribute to the effective functioning of the bargaining system and to the improvement of the bargaining relationship. It is important to keep these normative assumptions in mind, since as will be discussed in more detail later, there is growing evidence that the normative assumptions regarding the role of management underlying this pluralistic model are not entirely consistent with management behavior in the U.S. Indeed, a major theme running through this paper is that we must recognize even more than before that the key to making the pluralistic model survive and work as a means of accomodating diverse interests is that each party to the bargaining relationship must have sufficient power to force the other party to accept the pluralistic norms and to generate and sustain commitment to the bargaining system.

Theoretical Perspectives

Before developing the propositions concerning the role and behavior of management, the broader theoretical model of collective bargaining must be outlined so that we are aware of where management characteristics fit within this broader model. A general model of the collective bargaining system is presented in Figure 1. Management characteristics are presented as intervening variables that are affected by the external environment, the structure of bargaining, and the organizational characteristics of the union. Together with these other factors, management characteristics are seen as having an important effect on four sets of traditional dependent variables of interest to collective bargaining researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. These are: (1) the process of negotiations, (2) the outcomes of bargaining, (3) the administration of the agreement, and; (4) the process of change within a bargaining relationship. These traditional dimensions of the bargaining system must then be evaluated against the goals of individual workers, employers, and the public in order to measure the performance of the bargaining system. A comprehensive understanding of the role of management within this framework requires that we first explain how variations in the characteristics and behavior of management are influenced by other system characteristics and then relate these variables to the dependent variables outlined above and to the goals of the parties and the public.

Management Policies Towards Unions

A model of management under collective bargaining must begin with an analysis of the overall policies of employers toward trade unions. Earlier it was noted that one of the expectations that the pluralist model has for management is that the legitimacy of trade unions and the collective bargaining process is accepted and that management is committed to making the bargaining relationship perform effectively. There are reasons, however, to question the validity of this general assumption, both as it applies historically and currently to U.S. management. Instead, the following more limited proposition appears to be more accurate: U.S. management accepts the normative assumptions underlying the pluralist model only when unions are sufficiently powerful to force the employer to engage in collective bargaining.

In the U.S., management is generally a reluctant participant in collective bargaining. The vast majority of firms have always vigorously opposed efforts by unions to organize their employees. Brown and Myers (1957;92) described the sentiments of the majority of American executives well in an article written in the 1950s:

> "...It may well be true that if American management, upon retiring for the night, were assured that by the next morning the unions with which they dealt would have disappeared, more management people than now would experience the happiest sleep of their lives."

Yet, even given this generalized pattern of opposition, the intensity of management resistance to unions, as well as the strategies used by employers to remain non-union, have varied across firms and over time. Consequently, the first task of a model of management under collective bargaining is to attempt to explain both the intensity of management resistance to unions and the variations in the strategies employed.

Management Strategies for Avoiding Unions

Two distinct strategies for avoiding unions have been identified as far back as the 1920s (Witte, 1954): (1) direct union suppression policies, and (2) union substitution policies. Union suppression strategies are quite easily described. The use of strike breakers, industrial spies, armed guards, blacklisting, and other forms of discrimination against union supporters have been described by labor historians and journalists. Efforts to substitute for unions by developing comprehensive personnel management policies first began to appear in the post World War I time period. Employee representation plans, company unions, and scientific management began to emerge partially as mechanisms to reduce the incentive to turn to independent trade unions (Nadworthy, 1955; Millis and Montgomery, 1945).

Although empirical evidence in this area is quite difficult to generate, the same dual approaches to union avoidance appear to be present in the U.S. today. Indeed, there seems to be a relatively systematic relationship between the characteristics of the economic and organizational environments of employers and the strategies used to avoid unions. Those environmental and organizational conditions that appear to increase the probability that a firm will use a direct suppression strategy are: (1) the presence of a hostile political and social environment towards unions, (2) domination of the work force by low wage unskilled workers with few labor market alternatives, (3) an abundant supply of labor, (4) low recruitment and training costs, (5) low-profit--highly competitive industries, (6) small plants, and (7) the absence of a professional personnel staff.

In contrast, those firms that use a strategy of trying to reduce the psychological and economic incentives for employees to organize are more likely to be found in an environment of rapid growth, high profits, large scale production and employ workers who have sufficient skills and/or training to warrant the investment of a professional personnel and human resource management staff and program. Furthermore, firms employing this latter strategy often use sophisticated behavioral science techniques to monitor employee attitudes and economic welfare. In general, these firms tend to pay wages and fringe benefits that are equal to or comparable to workers in the same labor market, provide job security guarantees, and encourage the use of the most innovative techniques for promoting communications, information sharing, and development of trust and participation in decision making (Foulkes, 1980).

The evidence for these explanations of differences in strategies used to keep out unions come largely from case studies (Foulkes, 1980; Berenbiem, 1980). While there are no quantitative indicators, many people believe that management is becoming increasingly aggressive and effective in its efforts to avoid unions in the U.S. and that this increased management aggressiveness has had a deleterious effect on the overall climate for collective bargaining.

Intensity of Management Resistance

Only very superficial evidence of the current level of intensity of management opposition to unionization is available. The Conference Board survey (Freedman, 1979; Kochan, 1980) showed that among firms that currently have some employees organized "new union organizing" was ranked fourth in the list of eight labor relations goals. Approximately ten percent of these firms reported that avoiding union organizing was their top labor relations objective, however, thirty percent indicated that this objective was among the top three in importance to their firm. Twenty percent indicated this goal was not considered at all relevant to their firms. Those firms that gave this goal a higher ranking were ones in which only a minority of their current employees are organized. A -.43 correlation was obtained between a measure of the importance attached to avoiding further unionization and the percentage of current employees unionized. When a sample of unorganized firms was examined, however, almost all firms ranked avoidance of unionization as the most important labor relations objective. In addition, all firms, regardless of their degree of organization among blue collar employees, indicated that they were opposed to organization among their white collar and professional workers. Furthermore, a number of journalistic reports have shown that even among firms that have traditionally been highly unionized there is a growing tendency for employers to vigorously oppose unionization when new plants are opened. This is in contrast to the recent agreement signed by General Motors to extend automatic recognition to employees in any new plant that the company opens in the future.

To date, what little work that has been done on the question of management policies towards unions has been largely atheoretical. We do have the classic historical study of Bendix (1964) that stresses the ideological bases of managerial opposition to unions in the U.S. His thesis may provide the overriding explanation for generalized resistance to unions that we find among American managers. The fact that managerial intensity of interests in avoiding unionization declines as the percentage of a firms' employees unionized increases, suggest that managers make a pragmatic adaptation to unions, as union power increases. We also have some evidence that management in the public sector has been less vigorous in its opposition to unions than in the private sector. The traditional explanation for this is that it is politically costly for public sector management to vigorously oppose unions. All of this suggests a rather simple overriding proposition: the intensity of managerial opposition to unions in the U.S. is inversely related to the power a union can bring to bear on the employer.

In any event, it is probably less important to understand why management opposes unionization in the U.S. than it is to recognize that the opposition is generally strong and then to relate variations in overall management policies toward unions to their consequences for the collective bargaining system.

There are those who believe that the intensity of managerial opposition poses serious economic and social costs that constrain the ability of the collective bargaining system to achieve many of the economic and social objectives of workers, employers, and the public. All of this suggests that the study of management policies toward unions is an important area for research for both theoretical and policy related reasons. The overriding question that this research needs to address is: what effects do aggressive managerial efforts to avoid unions have on the rights, goals, and welfare of individual workers, trade unions, and the public.

Structural Response of Management to Unions

Slichter, Healy, and Livernash (1960) proposed that the arrival of a union leads to three managerial structural responses: (1) formalization of policies, (2) specialization of decision-making, and (3) redistribution of power within the management structure. In a more general sense, a union can be viewed as a form of external pressure or environmental uncertainty that induces differentiation within an organizational structure and encourages the establishment of specialized boundary spanning units (Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967). Again, however, employers do not naturally or voluntarily adapt in this way as soon as a union appears. A number of empirical studies have now shown that the degree to which management engages in these structural adaptations is partially a function of union power or pressure (Goldner, 1970; Kochan, 1975). At the same time, it is clear that a good deal of managerial discretion exists over these decisions since these environmental pressures can only explain a small percentage of the variance in either the power of boundary spanning units (Kochan, 1975) or even the size of the labor relations staff (Kochan, 1980b). Indeed, an effort to relate the Conference Board data on managerial structure to characteristics of the external environment that influence the power of the union was only marginally successful in explaining the size of the labor relations unit and generally unsuccessful in explaining the degree of specialization of centralization of decision-making power.

One reason for the lack of ability to explain variance using these propotions is that management generally views labor relations as a very strategic function requiring a highly centralized decision making process. The key strategic decisions over bargaining goals are made at the top levels of major corporations (Freedman, 1979; Kochan, 1980b) while the operational aspects of labor relations policy are often carried out as lower levels. It may also be that environment-organizational response theorists understate the importance of internal political conflicts that are generated whenever structural change is being considered. Thus future research on the structural responses of employers to trade unions should examine more closely the strategic considerations that influence how an organization structures itself and coordinates its internal decision-making process in bargaining with an adversary.

The Effects of Management Adjustments

The pressure for formalization of managerial policies arises from both the need for the firm to absorb the uncertainty that a union brings into the personnel and human resource planning function and the need to absorb the expected economic costs of unionization to the firm. Econometric studies have shown that, on average, American unions raise wages of their members between ten and twenty percent (Rees, 1978; Kochan 1980b). Most of the recent studies estimating the effects of unions on individual workers have found estimates within the upper end of this range. This economic pressure creates what has been referred to as a "shock effect" on management (Slichter, Healy, and Livernash, 1960) that forces a search for additional productivity improving adjustments within the firm. Alternatively, economists who subscribe to the neoclassical model of the firm would argue that the effects of unions and collective bargaining are to lower output, reduce employment opportunities for unionized workers and/or increase prices. Thus, the way management adjusts its policies to the presence of a union has important implications for the ultimate effects of collective bargaining on the economic goals of the firm, its employees and the public. Management's response to unions will also influence the behavioral aspects of the bargaining relationship since it will affect the climate and level of trust that develops between the union and management leaders and the attitudes of the workers toward their jobs, the employer and the union. Consequently, the nature and effects of these managerial adjustments to unions is an extremely important building block in a theory of management under collective bargaining.

Figure 2 presents a three stage model for tracing the effects of unions and these managerial adjustments on the economic and behavioral outcomes of interest to the firm, to employees, and to the public. The first stage of the model suggests that the major and primary effects of unions will be to improve wages, fringe benefits, and working conditions. Management will then attempt to respond by tightening up on work rules, introducing new technology, changing the organization of the work or the allocation of workers, a raising the quality of the workforce by either training existing workers or recruiting higher quality employees. The extent to which management is successful in recouping the increased costs of unionization through these managerial adjustments will determine the effects of collective bargaining on productivity and costs, and therefore, on employment, profits and prices. Thus, the ultimate effect of collective bargaining on these outcomes is determined by the joint effects of the power of the union to achieve gains for its members that increase costs and the ability of the employer to find ways of absorbing these costs through various managerial adjustments.

None of the managerial adjustments discussed above are neutral in terms of their effects on goals and interests of the employees and the union. Consequently, a complete model of the effects of managerial adjustment to trade unions must also examine their impact on such outcomes as the climate of the bargaining relationship, strike activity, grievance rates, employee safety and health, employee job satisfaction and related attitudes, turnover, absenteeism, and employee psychological well-being.

Unfortunately, we have very little empirical evidence of the effects of these managerial adjustments. Freeman and Medoff (1979) have recently reviewed a series of studies conducted under their direction which show that the nature of industrial relations within an industry appears to be directly related to productivity. One study, for example, showed that on average unions in manufacturing industries have a positive productivity effect. Another study that traced the effects of unions on productivity in the coal mining industry showed, however, that there was a positive productivity effect for the unionized sector in the 1950s when labor relations was stable (low rates of strikes, internal union stability, and low rates of wildcat strikes) while in the 1970's the productivity of nonunion sector exceeded that of the union sector. The authors attributed a substantial part of this shift to the deterioration in labor relations that occurred in coal mining in the most recent decade. These econometric studies have outlined the dimensions of the task facing behavioral scientists. They have shown that industrial relations seems to make a difference, and leave it to the behavioralists the task of identifying the dimensions of the collective bargaining relationship that influence productivity and, particularly, the managerial policies and practices that play a role within this process.

A number of recent studies have looked at the effect of unions and collective bargaining on job satisfaction and other measures of employee well-being under collective bargaining. The dominant finding to date is that unions increase satisfaction with the bread and butter issues of wages, job security, and fringe benefits, but are negatively related to satisfaction with job content, supervision, resource adequacy, and challenge. (Hammer, 1979; Freeman, 1976; Kochan and Helfman, 1979). Again these are simply cross sectional surveys of individual workers which leave unexplained variations around the average union effect. The challenge for behavioral scientists is to look at the variations within the collective bargaining relationship that influence these results.

Management Behavior in Negotiations

The process of negotiations serves as one of the traditional dependent variables in the study of collective bargaining. No effort will be made here to develop a comprehensive model of the negotiations process. Other papers at this conference address these issues. Instead, of central interest here is the role that management characteristics, goals and behaviors have on negotiations. One approach to exploring management effects on negotiations would be to focus on the dynamics of internal management-decision making across the various stages of negotiations process, (Walton and McKersie, 1965; Kochan, 1980b).

The employer representative is assumed to establish an initial set of targets and/or resistance points for the outcomes of negotiations. These targets and their subsequent modification in negotiations are influenced by external environmental pressures, the power of the union, and employer policies. The process of target setting and modification itself is viewed as an intraorganizational bargaining and conflict resolution process. The task of the management decision makers is to choose a position somewhere between their desired targets and the targets of the union. The central question for a theory of this internal decision making process is what factors influence the willingness of the employer to adapt its preferences in bargaining so as to accomodate the expectations and aspirations of the union?

We have some data and theory on what influences management's choices of wage targets. The Conference Board data showed, for example, that as the power of the union increases, and bargaining becomes more centralized, management adapted its wage criteria to conform more closely to the union's preferences for industry level wage comparisons, and cost-of-living considerations, and places less emphasis on management preferences for local labor market comparisons, and ability to pay considerations. Almost no work has been done recently, however, that examines management's preferences for other nonwage bargaining issues. This, therefore, can be added to our agenda for future research on the role of management under collective bargaining.

Another issue that must be addressed in a theory of management's impact on the negotiation process is the effect of managerial characteristics on the probability of an impasse or strike occurring in negotiations. Here some progress has been made in research within the last few years. This research is reviewed in the paper presented by Anderson at this conference and again need not be reviewed here.

The Administration of the Labor Agreement

Most discussions of the administration of labor management under collective bargaining focus on the formal grievance procedure. Yet, it has always been recognized that the formal procedure is only the most viable part of the day-to-day employment relationship under collective bargaining and that it is supplemented by a good deal of informal activity. A recent study of grievance procedures in Great Britain (Thomson and Murray, 1976) developed a contingency model for explaining variations in the dependence on formal legalistic adherence to the grievance procedure and informal resolution of disputes. They suggested a proposition that is well worth further development and empirical research: The lower the level of trust and the more hostile the climate between the employer and the union the more formal legalistic procedures take precedence over informal resolution processes. The Brett and Goldberg (1979) study of wildcat strikes in the coal industry support the argument that management labor relations policies, and the degree of trust workers have in management, influcence the use of the grievance procedures and the probability of wildcat strikes. If

Fox (1974) is correct in arguing that the pluralistic model of industrial relations leads to declining levels of trust within organizations and that this declining trust level in turn leads to declining levels of performance within an industrial relations system, then the study of the effects of trust and the factors that influence its development is indeed an important one.

A number of studies have attempted to develop theories of grievance rates or reliance on arbitration. Many of these apply the same general systems type model that was outlined in Figure 1 (Peach and Livernash, 1975; Knight, 1979). A number of studies have examined the effects of differences in leadership styles of first line supervisors. Beyond these isolated examples, however, there is little theory or empirical evidence on the effects of different management characteristics on the administrative dimension of bargaining relationships.

Change in Collective Bargaining

Change does not come naturally to a collective bargaining system since there are no strong economic incentives on the parties to make major changes in their bargaining relationship as long as things are working as well as can be expected. Both management and Union decision makers can be expected to engage in satisficing rather than optimizing behavior (Simon, 1955). When change does occur, it is often more incremental than dramatic and more sporadic than continuous in nature. The weak incentive for introducing change as long as a satisfactory level of performance is being achieved is reinforced by the high political risks associated with change strategies to both union and employer representatives.

Given the difficulty of introducing change, it is not surprising that organizational behavioral theorists have had difficulty in applying models of change from psychology or organizational theory to the context of union-management relations. One of the problems with efforts to apply models of this nature to collective bargaining is that the researchers often have assumed that the change process is inherently cooperative or integrative. In fact, two types of change processes can be distinguished in collective bargaining. The most common form of change has come through protracted power struggles and through the use of strikes or strike threats. Dubin (1954) noted that the strike and the strike threat traditionally served as the major mechanism for introducing social change in American industrial relations. More recently, (since 1960) the pressure for change has also come from the passage of new laws and government regulations effecting workplace conditions, compensation, and behavior. In contrast, most behavioral science models of the change process assume a much more integrative type of environment, set of issues, and process. Consequently, a complete model of the change process under collective bargaining, and a better understanding of the management variables that influence the change process and its outcomes, must consider both of these types of processes. The first task of such a theory should be to distinguish the conditions under which these types of processes are most likely to occur.

All change models start with the assumption that for change to be initiated some form of pressure or stimulus must be felt by the parties (Lewin, 1947). In collective bargaining this stimulus or pressure can come from the external environment in the form of economic pressures, government regulations, or technological advances. Alternatively, it can come from either the union members pressuring union leaders for change or from management pressuring for changes which improve the economic performance of the organization or increase the discretion of management. Given some form of perceived pressure the question then turns to which of the two forms of change are most likely to occur?

Social change through the formal negotiation process relying on the bargaining power of the party initiating the change is more likely to occur when (1) the issue is distributive in nature (that is, where the parties' goals are incompatible), (2) the outcome of the change process will alter the balance of power between the parties, (3) the results of the process promise relatively certain benefits so that the cause and effect relations between the proposal and its effects on the goals of the parties are well known and predictable, (4) where the level of trust between the parties is realtively low, and (5) the political positions of the leaders on both the union and the employers' side are unstable. Under these conditions, the parties are likely to turn to the formal negotiations process to achieve the desired changes. When management initiates this type of change strategy, the critical variables that appear to affect its success are (1) its ability and willingness to sustain a strike over the issue, (2) the degree of centralization and coordination of the management effort so that internal defections from the management position do not occur, and (3) the willingness of management to protect the job security of the workers and the organizational security of the union. This type of change process is most often found when the issue is the introduction of new technology or the negotiation of major productivity improvements (Levinson et al, 1970).

The alternative form of change, and the one that behavioral science is more accustomed to, is a joint integrative type of problem-solving process that supplements the formal negotiations of a new contract. This type of process is most likely to occur when the target of the change effort is the climate of the relationship, the level of trust between the parties, or the attitudes or behavior of individual workers. This type of change process is also more likely to be used when the benefits associated with the outcomes of change are less certain so that more problem-solving efforts are needed to search for the optimal solution to the problem, (2) neither party is seeking a major change in their existing balance of power, (3) the political positions of the union and management officials are relatively stable so that the process of cooperation or joint problem-sovling does not threaten their political positions, and (4) the level of trust in the bargaining relationship is already high. In this type of change process the degree of management commitment has been identified as the major management variable that influences the success of the process. In addition, management must be willing to make the organizational structural adaptations needed to give sufficient authority to the joint labor management committee or problem-solving group that manages the change process. Finally, the benefits from the change process must be shared in an equitable fashion between the management and the workers. This type of strategy has been commonly advocated by those seeking to get unions and employers to more aggressively address issues associated with the quality of work, work place safety and health, and productivity.

This is a difficult form of organizational change to sustain within a collective bargaining relationship because it requires continuous interaction and the ability to sustain the periodic efforts to use the power-strike based form of change in negotiations. Thus, this type of process is most likely to work during the term of an agreement and is most seriously challenged as the time for negotiating a new contract approaches. Since this type of process is more amenable to addressing problems associated with individual workers, this is the type of process where behavioral scientists have the greatest potential for improving through a combination of research and action. A substantial number of American managers are interested in addressing problems of productivity and worker attitudes through some form of change process (Freedman, 1979) yet they have been hesitant to do so because of the risks associated with these efforts.

Conclusions and Implications

This paper has reviewed a very broad range of issues relevant to the study of management under collective bargaining. An effort was made to both summarize existing knowledge as well as to offer a series of questions and several propositions for further research. It is clear that the study of management under collective bargaining will take on added importance in the coming years. American employers face a critical strategic choice as they enter the 1980s. During the 1970s many American employers displayed a declining commitment to collective bargaining and an increasing willingness to put efforts and resources into trying to keep their employees from organizing into trade unions. Yet, the Conference Board survey clearly indicated that a majority of those firms that are currently organized have adapted to the power of the unions they deal with and are now less interested in trying to eliminate trade unions and more interested in improving their performance within the bargaining relationship. The nature of industrial relations in the U.S. in the 1980s will be partly determined by which of two contending groups dominate management behavior: those seeking to eliminate unions or those seeking to improve their performance under bargaining. The 1980s should be a decade where behavioral scientists make a major commitment to developing theories, empirical research, and strategies for guiding those employers and unions who seek to employ the strategy of improving the performance of their collective bargaining relationships.

The kind of middle range theories and empirical research efforts being advocated here can make a contribution to both our understanding of the consequences of these two alternatives and to the probability that employers will succeed in whichever strategy they choose. Unfortunately, the dominat contribution of behavioral science research in the 1960s and 1970s was to increase the probability that those employers would succeed who chose the strategy of strongly resisting trade unions. It is hoped by developing a better understanding of the nature of collective bargaining, and particularly of the role and effects of management behavior under collective bargaining, that the 1980s will be a decade in which behavioral scientists help make it easier for employers to choose the alternative strategy.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for

The Study of Collective Bargaining

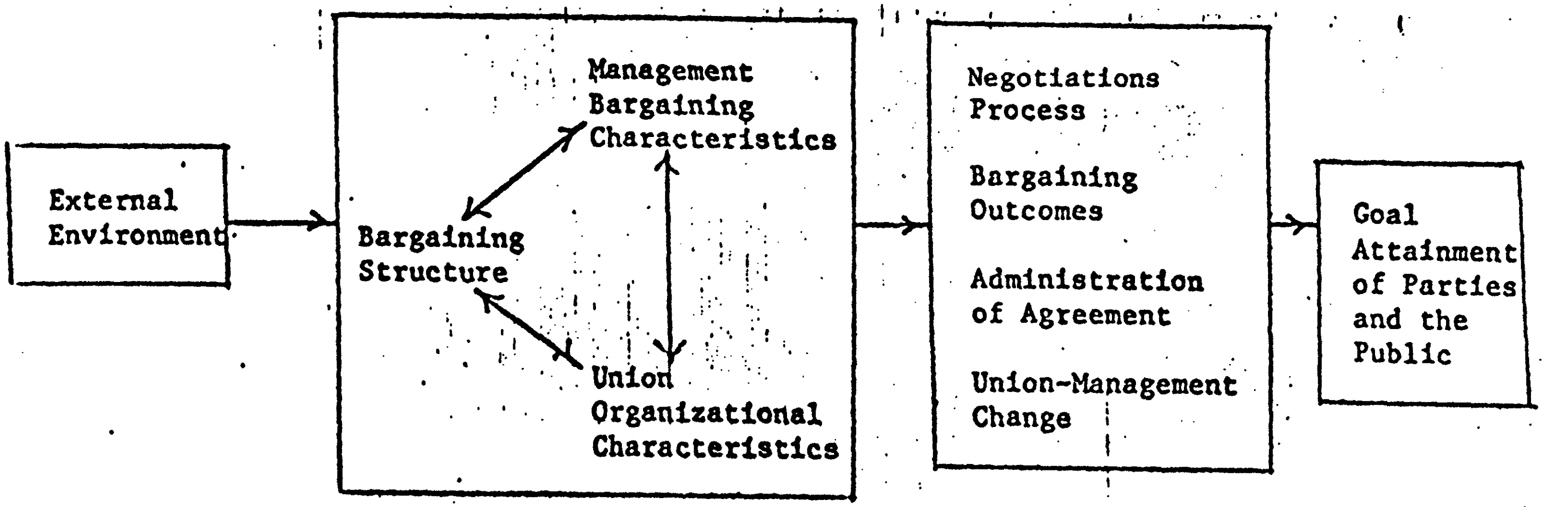
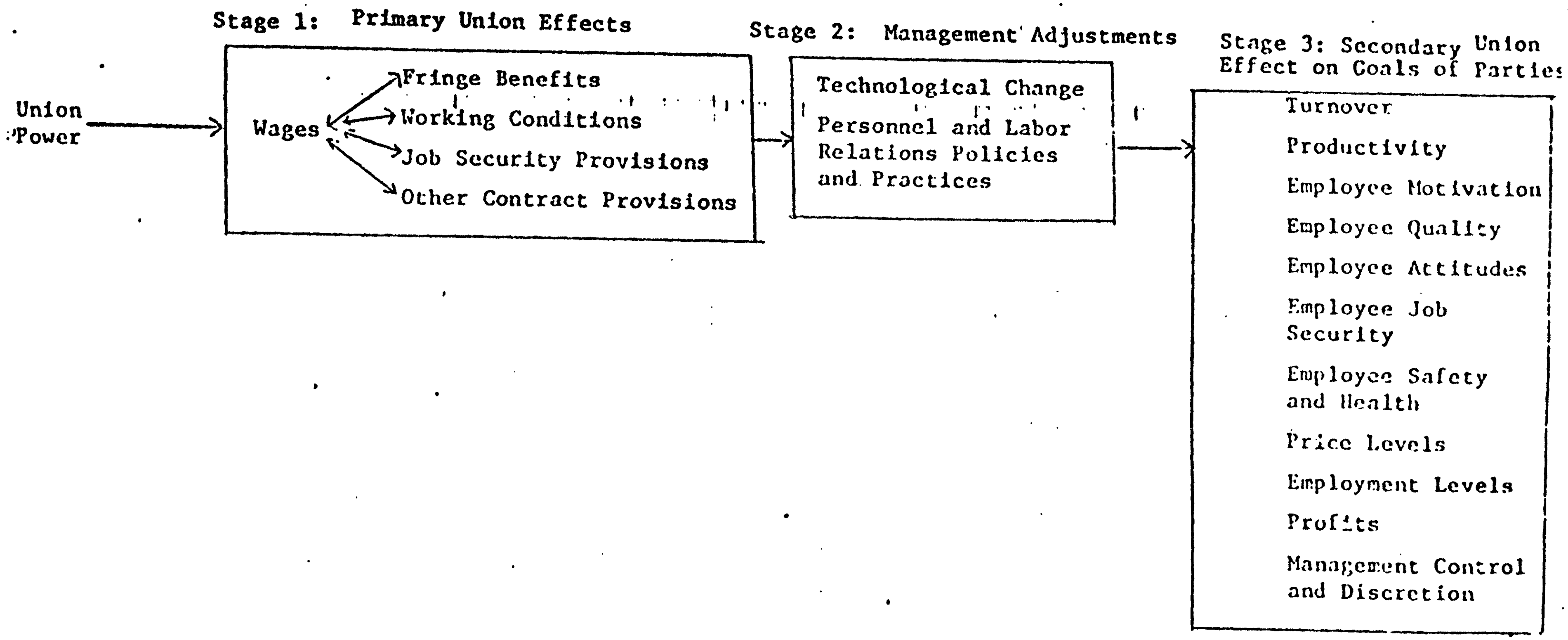


Figure 2

Sequential Model of Union Effects



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